

M Hawaii MARINE

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playoffs
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Rains pound island, flood base

Corinne Knutson
Lifestyles Editor

For the past eight weeks, Hawaii has suffered through numerous storms that brought heavy rains and thunder. This past Friday, a massive downpour closed some of the streets aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii and a minor sewage spill brought out four workers from Base Facilities who worked for four days to prevent sewage from spilling into Kaneohe Bay.

According to Lee Stebbins, Base Facilities and Maintenance Division, efforts seemed to pay off.

"The sewage plant was pegged out at its 5-million gallon capacity," said Stebbins, Repairs and Operations Branch head. He went on to say that not a single drop of raw sewage spilled from the main plant, which usually processes 1.25 million gallons of sewage a day, but is designed to treat 2 million gallons per day.

The plant was back to normal operations on Monday, said Stebbins.

During the heavy rains Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Stebbins said four of Base Facilities civil service employees worked 24-hour shifts.

"When it rains, somebody has to start the bal-



Cpl. Sara Carter

Andrew Baldauf (left), 51, and Kevin Aipoalani, 28, civil service workers with Base Facilities and Maintenance Division, clean out the Pond Road storm drain at North Beach, here.

let dance at the plant, adjusting and opening valves," he explained.

On the days that there was a heavier accumu-

lation of rain, his staff of 12 civil-service employees also checked drains, monitored the landfill near the rifle range for landslides, and did their

best to keep all base operations functioning properly.

"It was a unique event, to get that much water all at once," Stebbins said. "Many of the guys said this is the most water they'd ever seen on base."

Civil-service workers, Kevin Aipoalani, 28, a heavy labor contractor, and Andrew Baldauf, 51, a motor vehicle operator, cleared debris from the Pond Road storm drain.

"We're trying to keep drains clear as best we can," said Baldauf, who added that he has never seen weather this bad in the 27 years he has worked on base.

Baldauf and Aipoalani said that there was extensive flooding on the golf course and Lawrence Street, due to heavy rainfall and a backed up drain.

Jeff Larson, engineer, Base Environmental and Compliance Department said that because Lawrence and Manning streets are at low point in the sewage system, waste from this area must be pumped up hill. Due to rainwater seeping into the sewage line, approximately 2,000 gallons of sewage overflowed near Building 1566.

See RAIN, A-5



Courtesy Photo

Sgt. Maj. Michael Berg, sergeant major, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment and a native of Plymouth, N.H., presents Purple Heart, posthumously to Army Sgt. Kevin Akins, from Oglethorpe, Ga., by way of Burnsville, N.C.; Sgt. Anton Hiett, from Mount Airy, N.C., Staff Sgt. Joseph Ray, from Asheville, N.C., and Spc. Joshua Hill, from Fairmont, Ind. during a memorial service held recently at Jalalabad Airfield, Afghanistan. The four soldiers of the 391st Engineer Battalion were killed March 12 by an improvised explosive device while conducting route-clearing operations on the Pech River Road in the Kunar Province of eastern Afghanistan.

Marines, Sailors mourn loss of Army brethren

Sgt. Joe Lindsay
Combat Correspondent

ASADABAD, Afghanistan — Marines and soldiers gathered at Jalalabad Airfield recently to pay tribute to four soldiers assigned to the U.S. Army Reserve's 391st Engineer Battalion, Greenville, S.C., and Asheville, N.C. The soldiers were killed March 12 when an improvised explosive device ripped through their Humvee while their convoy was conducting route clearing operations on the notorious Pech River Road, also known as IED Alley, in the often volatile region of Kunar Province in eastern Afghanistan.

The four soldiers: Staff Sgt. Joseph Ray, 29, a combat engineer from Asheville; Sgt. Kevin Akins, 29, a combat engineer from Oglethorpe, Ga., by way of Burnsville, N.C.; Sgt. Anton Hiett, 25, a combat medic from Mount Airy, N.C.; and Spc. Joshua Hill, 24, a heavy-equipment

operator from Fairmont, Ind., were serving at Camp Wright in Asadabad at the time of the attack. Each soldier had less than one month remaining on their one-year tour in Afghanistan where they were deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom at the time of their deaths, noted Army Sgt. 1st Class Steven Wilson, route clearing package platoon sergeant for Camp Wright, 391st Engineer Battalion.

"Their deaths have really devastated us," said Wilson, a native of Canton, N.C. "They were out there serving on what is widely known as the most dangerous road in Afghanistan — the Pech River Road. They were doing their job, and they were saving lives."

"Their deaths are going to affect our battalion for a long, long time," continued Wilson. "We are not just fellow soldiers — we are friends. We are family. This has hurt our family a lot. It's tough."

According to Army Spc. Philip

McGinty, a combat engineer with the 391st Engineer Battalion who was riding in the vehicle directly behind the four soldiers' Humvee when the IED exploded, the loss has left everyone who knew the four reeling, including himself.

"I knew as soon as the bomb went off that it was over — that they were all dead," said McGinty, a native of Ellijay, Ga. "I was staring right at their vehicle when the IED hit. I saw the whole thing. I saw my buddies die. I just lost it. I went crazy, basically. Those were my friends in there — all dead. It's impossible to describe how I felt. How I feel."

"All four of them were great people, and I was really lucky to know them and especially to get to spend the last days of their lives with them," added McGinty. "We all worked together more as friends than as subordinates and commanders. It's just terrible what happened."

See BRETHEREN, A-4

IEDs no deterrent for 'America's Battalion'

Sgt. Roe F. Seigle
3rd Marine Regiment

BARWANAH, Iraq -- Hawaii-based Marines searching a known hotspot for insurgent-placed "improvised explosive devices" say the danger posed by these deadly devices don't deter them from providing security to the local populace here.

The Marines operating in this western Al Anbar Province town had one detonate only a few feet from them during a recent patrol and search operation in this town along the Euphrates River.

When the explosion occurred, the Marines, from Lima Co., 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, were teaching Iraqi Soldiers the tactics and procedures used by insurgents who place IEDs.

Since January 2005, IEDs have

are working hand-in-hand with on a daily basis.

"I know the insurgents responsible for this attack did this to see how far they can push us and to try to make us step down from establishing law and order here," said Sgt. Joshua Wartchow, a 22-year-old squad leader. "This just makes the Marines more determined and cautious."

Directly after the blast, the Marines witnessed the suspected triggerman flee back into a village.

Before the make-shift bomb detonated, the Marines were teaching soldiers from the Iraqi Army the known tactics and procedures of how insurgents place improvised explosive devices. According to one Iraqi soldier, "Ahmad," the experience was ironic and eye-opening.

Ahmad said that IEDs are a



Sgt. Roe F. Seigle

U.S. Marines from the Hawaii-based 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment patrol through Barwanah, Iraq — a small village off the Euphrates River in western Al Anbar Province — for any signs of insurgent activity March 23. During the patrol, Marines and Iraqi soldiers encountered an improvised explosive device (IED) — a make-shift bomb used by insurgents to harm coalition forces and the Iraqi populace. The Marines, from 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, said the danger posed by these deadly devices don't deter them from providing security to the local populace here.

accounted for about 50 percent of all U.S. fatalities in Iraq, according to the Iraq Coalition Casualty Count — an organization which tallies U.S. and coalition casualties, based off Department of Defense press releases.

The IED explosion was the first hostile action against the Marines from Lima Company since their arrival here.

Despite the threat of IEDs, the Marines insist they will not be deterred from training the Iraqi Security Forces "in high military standards" while establishing a good relationship with the Iraqi people and the Iraqi soldiers they

common occurrence in Iraq, but he has never had an up-close and personal encounter with one like he did March 24.

Wartchow was less than 15 feet from the device when it detonated.

"I remember it feel like I was in slow motion," recalled Wartchow, a native of Doylestown, Pa. "I saw it explode and dust go everywhere. I felt it throw my body back from the hill I was standing on."

He said other Marines in the area could not see him after the blast because it pushed him down

See IED, A-4

News Briefs

Key Volunteer Appreciation

Today there will be a Key Volunteer Appreciation Ceremony at Pop Warner Field from 4 to 6 p.m.

This is a special event organized by Marine Corps Family Team Building to show appreciation to all the Key Volunteers and their families for all their hard work. There will be a short ceremony followed by a social hour with live music, refreshments, and bouncy houses for the kids.

Each Key Volunteer will receive a ticket for a random drawing and chance to win a prize.

For more information or to RSVP, contact 1stLt Eve Baker at 257-7777, eve.baker@usmc.mil.

Promotion Briefs

Major James McLaughlin, enlisted promotions section head, Headquarters Marine Corps, will be giving three briefs today.

The first brief is scheduled for 10 a.m. at Camp Smith's Pollock Theater. The second and third briefs are scheduled for 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii at the Base Theater. Each brief will last approximately one hour with a 30-minute question and answer period to follow. As the Base Theater's parking lot is now closed, parking is available at the Bowling Alley and behind Building 4009. The target audience for this brief is all officers, SNCOs, and sergeants who will be in zone for promotion. For more information, contact Gunnery Sgt. Hodges, base adjutant chief at 257-7712.

Commissary Closure

The Base Commissary will be closed for inventory Monday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. It will reopen for business at 1 p.m. and continue normal operations.

Prayer Breakfast

The annual Hawaii Prayer Breakfast will be held at 7 a.m. Thursday at the Hilton Hawaiian Village's Coral Ballroom. A number of tickets have been donated for use by Marines and Sailors aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii. Additional personnel are invited to attend. The guest speaker is Russell O'Quinn, internationally known test pilot and aircraft designer. For tickets or more information, contact the Base Chapel at 257-2734.

Pride Day Friday

Each year, Marines and Sailors join forces to rid the base of trash and debris. This year, Master Sgt. Sheldon A. Comer, deputy base inspector, is again encouraging all units to participate in this base-wide event. The significance of Pride Day was to focus on an intense, thorough systematic field day of the entire installation, said Comer of last year's efforts. This year Pride Day kicks off at 8 a.m.

Excellence in Federal Government Awards Luncheon

The Honolulu Executive Board is sponsoring the 2006 Excellence in Federal Government Awards Luncheon, May 2, at the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel, Hawaii Ballroom Contact Daniel Gonzales in Building 216, room 81, 257-8808, prior to April 11 to purchase tickets.

Navy/Marine Corps Relief Society fundraiser

This year's fundraising drive is underway and will continue until April 21. Service members who would like to donate to the NMCRS should contact their unit representative who is spearheading the NMCRS fundraiser for their unit.

Important Phone Numbers:

On-Base Emergencies	911
Military Police	257-7114
Child Protective Service	832-5300
Fraud, Waste, Abuse & EEO	257-8852
Business Management Hotline	257-3188
Pothole & Streetlight Repair	257-2380
Base Information	449-7110
MCBH Duty Chaplain	257-7700

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COMMANDING GENERAL'S PROCLAMATION “Sexual Assault Prevention Begins ... With You”

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. It is my intention to raise awareness and promote the prevention of sexual violence. The theme for this year is “Sexual Assault Prevention Begins ... With You.” The theme reminds us of our role as leaders, mentors, friends or co-workers in sexual assault prevention

During the past year, the military services and the Department of Defense (DoD) have developed and implemented policies addressing sexual assault prevention and response. These new policies enhance military readiness by deterring sexual assault and improving victim support. They help establish a climate of confidence in which:

- sexual assault and the attitudes that promote it are not tolerated
- victims of sexual assault receive the care and support that they needed, and
- offenders are held accountable for their actions.

One significant policy change allows sexual assault victims confidentiality when reporting to a Uniformed Victim Advocate (UVA), Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC), Chaplain, Health Care Provider or Victim Advocate. Confidentiality removes many of the barriers (fear, embarrassment, shame) normally associated with reporting such crimes by allowing victims to receive treatment and support without having to initiate a criminal investigation.

These new policies and initiatives are the first steps in a long-term effort to eliminate sexual assault from our ranks and to provide better care and support to the victims. Each of us has a responsibility in preventing sexual assaults and creating an environment characterized by honor, respect and dignity.

S. A. HUMMER
Brigadier General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commanding General, Marine Corps Base Hawaii

3rd Radio Battalion holds blood drive

Cpl. Michelle M. Dickson
Combat Correspondent

In an effort to replenish supplies of donated blood that are currently being sent to overseas units that are deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, members of 3rd Radio Battalion hosted a blood drive March 30.

“There are people out there that need it,” said Lance Cpl. Michelle E. Breyer, Korean linguist, 3rd Radio Battalion, III Marine Expeditionary Force, as she sat back in her chair awaiting the slight prick of the needle. “I would hope if I need blood one day that someone would be willing to donate to me.”

Dozens of people like Breyer came out March 30 to 3rd Radio Battalion's blood drive, held at the electronic and maintenance facility, here.

The goal of the drive was to educate service members and stress the importance for the military community, especially in Hawaii, to donate blood, said Guy M. Harrigan Jr., blood donor recruiter, Tripler Army Medical Center.

“Through the Armed Services Blood Program, we are currently sending more than 500 units of blood per week in support of OIF and OEF,” explained the Greenville, S.C. native. “We want to get the word out to the military and their families that we need to take care of each other. We are a military blood program and even the Blood Bank of Hawaii or the American Red Cross will not provide blood for the military at no cost. We need to donate and provide for each other.”

Harrigan said the main problem with getting donations from the military is the restriction

placed on service members, who are returning from deployments.

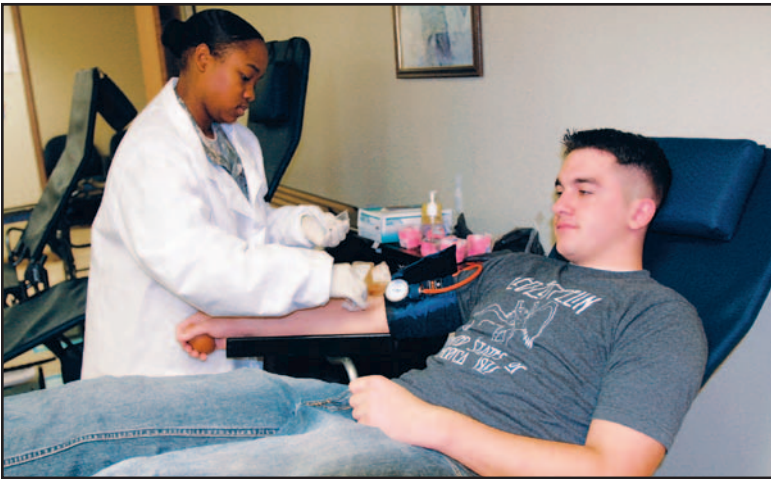
“Most of the personnel on bases are either deployed, or just returned from a deployment to either Iraq or Afghanistan,” said Harrigan. “These people must wait one year before being eligible to donate again. Actually, 43 percent of the military is ineligible to donate blood, but 80 percent will need blood, even if not in combat.”

Other restrictions that can disqualify a person from being able to donate blood is if he or she has had a tattoo or piercing within the last 12 months. Another reason is if he or she has traveled to Europe for six months or more, between 1980 and 1996, and/or has traveled to Iraq or Afghanistan for 12 months.

“We know that there are new service members that arrive to bases all of the time so we would like to be able to at least know that we can get a few of them to donate,” said Harrigan. “We’re hoping to get at least 30 to 40 units of blood today at this drive.”

The blood drive held by 3rd Radio Battalion was originated by Lance Cpl. Chris W. Glock, electronic intelligence analyst operator, 3rd Radio Battalion, who said that he found out that there is a lack of blood available on island and also, how easy it was to coordinate and make the drive happen.

“I’ve been in Radio Battalion’s Remain



Cpl. Michelle M. Dickson

Lance Cpl. Joe G. Snyder, communicator, 3rd Radio Battalion, donates blood, March 30. The next blood drive will be at the base chapel, April 5.

Behind Element for a while now, supporting the troops as they went out,” said Glock. “When Guy informed me about the blood drives and how there are such low supplies of blood in the desert, I thought it’d be another way that myself and the battalion could help out.”

Glock said the support from the battalion was what he had expected, because most of them had already been to Iraq.

“The people who could donate, did it,” said the Aurora, Colo. native. “The command supported the drive; everyone who could participate did.”

The next blood drive on base will be April 5, at the base chapel, and April 12 at the Installation Personnel Administration Center.

“Even spouses and family members can host or donate at a blood drive,” said Hannigan. “We want to get everyone involved, even if the active family member may be deployed at the time.”

For more information on hosting a blood drive in the near future, contact Guy Hannigan at Tripler Army Medical Center, 433-6699.

Tax filing deadline fast approaching

Lance Cpl. Roger L. Nelson
Combat Correspondent

The time to file your taxes is winding down, and the Marine Corps Base Hawaii Tax Center, will help you file your taxes until the deadline.

“The general filing deadline for most people this year is midnight on April 17,” said Capt. Adam T. Snow, officer-in-charge, Tax Center. “For the Tax Center to e-file your taxes in a timely manner, come in early on the 17th.” If you choose to mail in your own taxes, make sure you get it postmarked no later than April 17 and that the envelope is properly addressed with enough postage.”

Snow said if a Marine or Sailor was deployed for contingency operation in 2005, they have an automatic extension and can file and pay their taxes at least 180 days after they left the combat zone. However, in general, it’s best to file within the normal deadlines.

“Remember, the (Internal Revenue Service) is a massive bureaucracy you probably do not want knocking at your door,” said Snow, a Richardson, Texas native.

Taxpayers may also request an extension by filling out the necessary forms with the IRS and can be submitted at the Tax Center, said Snow.

According to Lance Cpl. Derek T. Mallow, administrative clerk, Headquarters Company, 3rd Marine Regiment, getting his taxes prepared at the base tax center saved him a lot of time on his tax return.

“I was at the office for only 20 minutes, and everything was taken care of,” said Mallow. “I got my return directly deposited into my checking account about a week later, so it took a lot less time for me to get my money.”

According to Snow, the average time to get taxes prepared is approximately 20 to 30 minutes.

“We’ve had some returns that took an entire day to figure out,” said Snow. “We have every issue under the sun pass through here. Things from \$100,000 in profits on land sales, to Hurricane Katrina losses, to disability related severance payments.”

Mallow said he also saved a lot of money getting his taxes prepared at the MCBH Tax Center.

“Before I joined the Marines, I got my taxes done at this place near my house that charged a certain percent of whatever my return was,” said Mallow, an Oceanside, Calif. native. “Even when I did get my taxes back, which was usual

See TAXES, A-4

Weekend weather outlook

Today



Day — Partly to mostly cloudy skies throughout day. The winds will be northeasterly to easterly at 10 to 12 knots with gust to 18 knots during the day. There will be isolated rain showers during the early morning hours.

Night — Partly cloudy with temporary mostly cloudy conditions throughout the evening. The winds will be northeasterly at 06 to 08 knots with gusts to 15 knots.

High — 78
Low — 72

Saturday



Day — There will be partly cloudy skies with temporary mostly cloudy conditions during the afternoon hours. The winds will be northeasterly to easterly at 12 to 15 knots with gusts to 23 knots. Expect isolated light rain showers before sunrise.

Night — Partly cloudy skies will prevail throughout the night. Winds will be easterly at 08 to 12 knots with gusts to 18 knots. Expect few rain showers during the early evening hours.

High — 79
Low — 72

Sunday



Day — Partly cloudy skies becoming mostly cloudy by the afternoon. The winds will be easterly 10 to 15 knots with gusts to 20 knots. There will be light rain showers during the afternoon hours.

Night — Mostly cloudy skies will prevail throughout the night. Winds will be easterly at 08 to 12 knots with isolated gusts to 16 knots. Expect few rain showers over night.

High — 79
Low — 72

Legacy of corpsman lives on

Sgt. Joe Lindsay
Combat Correspondent

JALALABAD, Afghanistan — When Petty Officer 3rd Class John Fralish, a hospital corpsman assigned to Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, based in Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, was killed in action during a firefight with enemy insurgents north-west of Mehtar Lam in the Laghman Province of eastern Afghanistan Feb. 6, it was by no means the end of his remarkable story – or his legacy.

Indeed, according to U.S. Army 1st Sgt. David Schneider, infantry first sergeant, Echo Company, 1st Battalion, 125th Infantry, Michigan Army National Guard, Fralish is still revered among not only his fellow corpsman and the Marines and soldiers he served with, but also by residents of a tiny village high in the mountains near Fralish’s former forward-operating base at Mehtar Lam.

“The name of John Fralish lives on in the mountains of Afghanistan among the local population,” said Schneider, a native of Dimondale, Mich., who currently trains Afghan National Army soldiers while serving as

recalled Schneider. “There was a small fire going on in the hut, for light and warmth. John went to where the little girl was. She had fallen in the mountains a while back and was missing a chunk of her calf muscle. Her leg was hurt real bad. The cut was six inches long and five inches wide down to the bone. Fabric from an old dress was being used as a bandage, and it was soaked through not with blood, but with puss. Infection had set in, and she probably had no more than a couple of days to live if she would have remained in that state.”

Fralish would see to that she didn’t remain in that state for long.

“He immediately cleaned the wound, applied antibiotics and redressed it,” recalled Schneider. “Still, that was only going to buy her a couple more days of life at best. She needed immediate surgery in a hospital. We were on a combat mission that we had to get back to, but John wasn’t just going to sit by and let this girl die.

“He took off his rank insignia and gave it to the old man, along with a note he wrote explaining who he was and what the situation was, and for this girl and her family to be given safe passage to the medical facility at Mehtar Lam,” said Schneider. “Over the next couple of days, while we were in the field, the girl’s family got her to Mehtar Lam on the back of a donkey. When we returned to the FOB at Mehtar Lam, the girl was there being treated. Her family was overjoyed to see John again, and they rightfully credited him with making this all possible.”

Still, the girl’s wound and infection were too serious to be adequately treated at Mehtar Lam, said Schneider, and nothing short of amputation of her lower leg would save her life.

“When we heard that, everyone passed the hat around, and we got enough money together so the family could hire a car to take them to the hospital at Bagram Airfield,” said Schneider. “It was airmen, soldiers, Marines and Sailors – everyone chipping in together.

“Well, the girl’s family showed the note John had written along with his rank insignia at every check point, and it got their car through to Bagram where the little girl underwent successful surgery,” said Schneider. “She made it, and she’s recovering nicely and is alive and well now directly because of John. She has a second chance at life.”

As fate would have it, right around the time of the surgery that saved the girl’s life, Fralish was killed during a firefight with insurgents.

“His actions saved her life,” said Petty Officer 3rd Class Christopher Taylor, hospital corpsman, Alpha Company, 1/3. “I would have given anything if John would have been alive to see the girl again after her surgery, but I know in his heart he knew she was going to make it. It was very important to him that she was OK.

“Here is a guy who goes out every day on combat missions where he knew he might get killed, but he never concerned himself with that,” continued Taylor, a native of The Woodlands, Texas, who served alongside Fralish at Mehtar Lam. “His concern was always with the Marines whose lives were in his hands as well as the Afghan locals who needed help.

“That whole village mourned John’s death along with us,” said Petty Officer 3rd Class Cameron Stewart, a hospital corpsman with 1/3 from Spokane, Wash., who has strong family ties to Vancouver, Wash. “All those who

served with John were and are deeply affected by his loss. To see Afghan villagers also affected by the loss is a true testament to the character and type of person John was.

“John was like a brother to me,” continued Stewart. “He had the kindest heart of anyone I have ever met.”

Others who served with Fralish spoke of him in a similar vein.

“He literally saved that small girl’s life,” said Chief Petty Officer Claude English, enlisted senior medical department representative, 1/3. “It just goes to show you what type of special person John was. He is at the tip of the spear when it comes to heroes,” admitted the New Orleans native.

“John was good-natured and had a huge heart,” said Petty Officer 1st Class Tim Gorman, leading petty officer, 1/3. “It was a true reflection of who he was as a person – the things he would do for one little girl in the middle of a foreign country to make sure she got the proper care she needed. Any chance he got to help someone, he did.

“I really miss him,” continued Gorman, a native of Queens, N.Y., by way of Tucson, Ariz. “It’s been two months since he died, but I don’t miss him any less. I’ll miss him for as long as I live. He’ll always be with me and the



Photo courtesy of Chief Petty Officer Claude English

Petty Officer 3rd Class John Fralish, a corpsman with 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, from New Kingstown, Pa., poses for a photo in Methar Lam, Afghanistan, shortly before being killed in action during a firefight with insurgents on Feb. 6.

officer, 1/3, who has since mailed it to Fralish’s parents in Pennsylvania.

“It was an honor to pass this on John Fralish’s family,” said Bierman, a Virginia native. “This entire story demonstrates the character and nobility of the young Marines and Sailors serving here in Afghanistan.”

And also, perhaps, demonstrates how one man’s actions can change the mind-set of an entire community.

“Ever since John’s actions, that village and

Photo by Sgt. Joe Lindsay

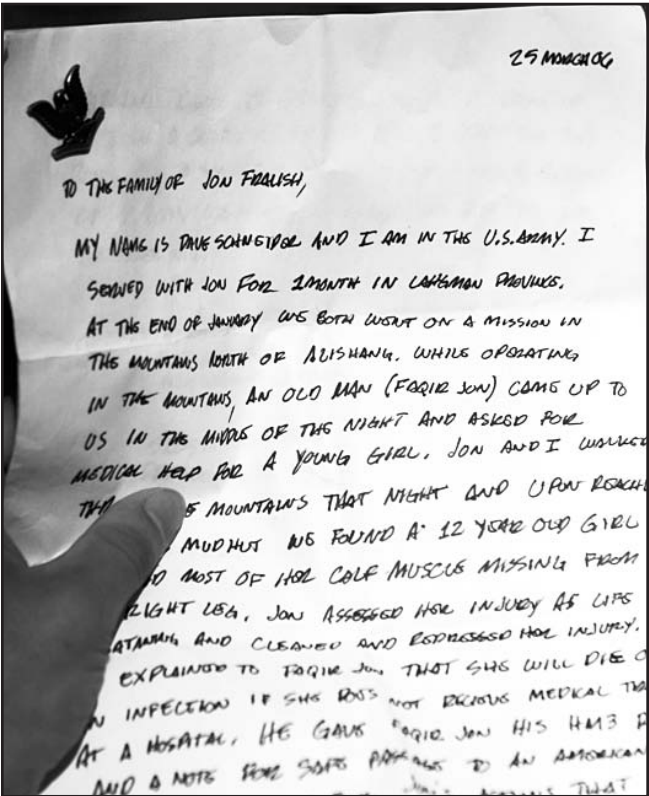


Photo by Sgt. Joe Lindsay

Fralish Legacy 6: A letter written by U.S. Army 1st Sgt. David Schneider, infantry first sergeant, Echo Company, 1 st Battalion, 125th Infantry, Michigan Army National Guard, displays the actual rank insignia of Petty Officer 3rd Class John Fralish, a hospital corpsman with 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, from New Kingstown, Pa., who was killed in action Feb. 6 during a firefight with insurgents in Langham Province, Afghanistan. The letter, along with Fralish’s rank insignia, were recently mailed back to Fralish’s parents in Pennsylvania by Lt. Col. James Bierman, commanding officer, 1/3.

the noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the Army’s embedded training team at Mehtar Lam. “Just before he died, John risked his life to save the life of a little Afghan girl on the brink of death.”

While on a combat patrol with Alpha Company in early February, shortly before his death, Fralish, who was from New Kingstown, Pa., got word from an old Afghan man that there was a little girl who was in bad shape a few miles away, said Schneider.

“When John heard that there was a child who needed help, he was going to do everything he could to see to it that she got that help,” commented Schneider. “John wanted to help everyone who was hurt. It’s just the way he was. Keep in mind, we were in hostile territory, and it was the middle of the night, but John wanted to go.”

And with that, Fralish, Schneider, two ANA soldiers and an interpreter left with the old man to find the girl.

“The old man led us to this little mud hut in the middle of nowhere up in the mountains,”



served with. That smile – the whole Captain America persona. You can’t defeat it.”

And neither, it seems, can the spirit of Fralish’s legacy among the villagers of the girl whose life he helped to save.

“The girl, her family, and all the villagers were extremely saddened to learn of John’s death,” Schneider said. “They were deeply affected by the news.”

The rank insignia Fralish gave to the girl’s family that first night was recently returned to Schneider when the old Afghan man who originally led Fralish to the girl’s family hut visited Mehtar Lam.

Schneider subsequently passed the insignia on to Lt. Col. James Bierman, commanding

the surrounding area have made it a point to alert us to insurgent activity,” said Schneider. “What used to be an area where the insurgents could blend in and operate in has now turned against them.”

“Those villagers getting a chance to meet John and seeing his actions turned the tide of a lot of Afghan people’s way of thinking who may not have trusted the coalition before,” continued Schneider. “Now, not only was a little girl’s life saved by John, but more American and coalition forces’ lives can be saved as a result of the insurgents losing their grip on the area. All because of one man’s sense of humanity. John Fralish’s legacy remains and will continue to remain long after his death.”

Photo illustration by Andy Falelua

Petty Officer 3rd Class John Fralish, from New Kingstown, Pa., a hospital corpsman with 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, rests his elbow on the back of a Humvee high-back vehicle, Feb. 5, the day before he was killed in action during a firefight with insurgents in Langham Province, Afghanistan. This is the last known photograph of Fralish.



BRETHREN, from A-1

I will miss them all, as long as I live.”

Many of the soldiers from the 391st who served with the four slain soldiers were still too shaken up by the deaths to discuss their friendships.

“I’m just not ready to talk about it yet,” admitted Army Spc. Jesse Hutchison, a combat engineer from Kingsport, Tenn., who served side by side the four soldiers. “They were just so dedicated ...,” his words trailing off into an obvious sea of emotion that made it too difficult for him to continue.

Marines from 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment were also feeling the sting of the loss of Ray, Akins, Hiett and Hill.

“The soldiers from the 391st work with us very closely here at Asadabad,” said 1st Sgt. Gerard Calvin, first sergeant, Charlie Company, 1/3. “All the Marines here are feeling this loss very deeply. The 391st supports just about every mission we go on, and the work they have done has played a very crucial role in the success we have had out here. It is impossible to say how many Marine Corps and coalition forces lives the soldiers from the 391st have saved over here through their route clearings.

“They have one of the most dangerous jobs in the entire military,” continued Calvin, a native of Richmond, Va., currently serving a third tour of duty in Afghanistan. “What it comes down to is that those four soldiers gave their lives, saving the lives of others.”

Lava Dogs from 1/3 who served with Ray, Akins, Hiett and Hill spoke of them in the highest of terms.

“All the soldiers of the 391st have our respect out here – none more so than Staff Sergeant Ray, Sergeant Akins, Sergeant Hiett and Specialist Hill,” said Sgt. Damian Haug, an infantry platoon sergeant with Headquarters Company, 1/3. “What First

Sergeant Calvin said about them giving their lives so others could live is exactly right.

“The bottom line is that every single Lava Dog family member back in Hawaii and throughout the nation should be thanking God that we have these soldiers from the 391st out here with us sweeping these roads for IEDs,” continued Haug, a native of Fargo, N.D. “They have found countless IEDs out here that would have killed many Marines. A lot of Marines are going to be coming home to their families because of the 391st. They deserve our deepest respect. I know they’ve got mine. I’ll always be proud to be able to say I served with alongside the 391st and that I got to meet men like these four heroes.”

Lance Cpl. William Duffield, a rifleman by trade currently serving as a clerk for Charlie Company, 1/3 said he couldn’t agree more.

“The Marine Corps and the Army have a history of their Marines and soldiers giving each other a hard time about who is better, who is tougher and stuff like that,” said Duffield, an Iraq veteran who received the Purple Heart for wounds he sustained in the battle of Fallujah. “But just underneath the surface of all that back and forth joking is a profound respect that Marines and soldiers feel for each other. I can tell you right now that nobody’s got as much respect for the soldiers in the 391st as the Marines from 1/3 who had the honor of serving with them in Afghanistan.

“The way we feel right now, it’s no different than if Marines had died,” continued Duffield, a native of Ridgway, Pa. “Those four soldiers were our brothers. They sweated with us over here, they fought with us over here and ultimately they died over here. But they died so that we could live. There is no greater sacrifice.”



Sgt. Kevin Donudell Akins
January 10, 1977 – March 12, 2006.



Sgt. Anton Jesean Hiett
July 26, 1980 – March 12, 2006.



Spc. Joshua Lee Hill
January 31, 1982 – March 12, 2006.



Staff Sgt. Joseph Randall Ray
February 27, 1977 – March 12, 2006.

Photos courtesy of 391st Engineer Battalion

IED, from A-1

the hill they were standing on.

“I did not even think about the fact that I could have been seriously injured,” said Wartchow. “I just wanted to find the trigger-man.”

Although this was the first IED experience for these Marines, IEDs are not new to the Al Anbar Province, which was once a hot bed of insurgent activity. IEDs used to be part of the daily regimen for many U.S. servicemembers, until Marines and Coalition Forces wiped out the foreign fighters seven months ago.

Still, the experience was an eye-opener for some, a reminder that though locals in this small town are waving and children are greeting the Marines and Iraqi soldiers, Iraq is still a war zone.

Now, Marines have to be even more on the alert, combat complacency, and keep an eye out for potentially hidden bombs.

“I knew we had Marines in the area of the explosion,” said 1st Lt. Eric Montgomery, a pla-

toon commander with Lima Co. “I was ready to call for a medical evacuation. I found out no one was injured when I arrived on the scene to assist.”

Still, the Marines leave nothing to chance. They will continue to maintain a strong presence here to disrupt insurgent activity. Moreover, the Marines say their kindness should be not be mistaken for weakness.

“The insurgents are going to realize that Lima Company is not a poorly-trained unit,” said Montgomery, 24. “We will continue to establish a presence here. We will also be proactive and aggressive in finding the insurgents.”

Montgomery believes the Iraqi Army unit partnered with Marines here is steadily learning to conduct independent operations and its soldiers are making bounds in progress toward relieving Coalition forces here.

“The Iraqi Army is learning quickly,” said Montgomery, a native of Cary, N.C. “As they continue to improve and the number of insurgents steadily decrease, Coalition forces will be able to withdraw.”

TAXES, from A-2

of your refund for such a loan.

“Another reason why the Marine Corps Base Hawaii Tax Center should be used is because we can do your state returns. Most places out in town in Hawaii will not complete an out-of-state return,” said Snow. “We see many, many taxpay ers who have already gone out in town and paid to do their federal return but still have to come in and see us for their state.”

Mallow said another reason he chose to go to the MCBH Tax Center is because they also help military members and their dependents get the proper return for deductibles.

“They helped me get money back for what I spent on books and supplies for school,”

said the 20-year-old. “I can honestly say I recommend the Tax Center to anyone who is able to go there. It would really make no sense to go anywhere else. It’s free, quick, and the service of the Marines and civilians working there is superb.”

The MCBH Tax Center, located in Building 401 is open from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m., Monday thru Friday. The center is scheduled to remain opened until April 25 and will reopen next year in mid January, said Snow.

If a taxpayer chooses to mail in their own taxes, they should make sure they get it postmarked no later than April 17 and that the envelope is properly addressed with enough stamps, said Snow.

For more information about the MCBH Tax Center, call 257-1399.

From the Edge



Staff Sgt. Ralph Scott
Tallahassee, Fla.
infantry platoon sergeant, 1/3

*To my wife Ingrid and our babies –
I love you and miss you very much.
I will see you soon.
Aloha from my little clan.*



Sgt. Michael Chambers
Lexington, S.C.
infantry platoon sergeant, 1/3

*To my beautiful wife Michelle
– I love you and miss you and the kids.
To Trevor, Tyler, Triston and Max
- love you guys. To everyone back in
South Carolina – Go Gamecocks!*

Financial Forum to benefit all

Cpl. Megan L. Stiner
Combat Correspondent

The National Association of Securities Dealers is hosting a free financial educational forum scheduled for Wednesday at the Hawaii Convention Center, downtown Honolulu, from 9:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m.

All service members, military retirees, DoD employees and family members are welcome to attend the day long event. Transportation is provided to and from HCC, and a free continental breakfast and lunch are also provided to attendants. A detailed transportation schedule for each base is available at the NASD Web site: SaveAndInvest.org

“The information presented is beneficial to anyone who attends the forum,” said Ed Josiah, personal financial management counselor, Marine Corps Community Services, here. “Everyone, from the private who wants to gain information on savings to the senior officer who is interested in beefing up their portfolio, can gain useful information from going to the forum.”

According to Josiah, a lot of individuals have questions concerning financial benefits and savings investments, but many don’t ask questions or get the information they need, because they don’t want to end up getting scammed or getting stuck listening to a long sales pitch.

“This forum is safe, easy, and extremely informative,” said the Big Island, Hawaii native. “The entire event is also free of charge. There just aren’t any drawbacks to attending.”

Some of the information presented includes mutual funds, smart saving for retirement and investing tips and advice.

Strict rules also prohibit any sales presentations during the program or anywhere on the premises, to ensure attendants only receive the educational information intended at the event.

A question and answer session is also included at the forum, at which time guests can inquire about any general information they have concerns about. The speakers include Senator Dan Akaka, Robert Glauber and Mary Schapiro.

Individuals interested in attending must register either online or at their base Family Services Office.

For more information on the event or to register, visit SaveAndInvest.org or call toll free to 866-862-0110.

High surf on MCBH



Cpl. Sara Carter

An officer assigned to Provost Marshall's Office places cones in the roadway to prevent traffic flow on Mokapu Road during a heavy rainstorm, March 31.



Cpl. Sara Carter

Marines, Sailors and civilian Marines drive through floodwaters on Mokaupu Road, March 31. Heavy rains caused some of the roads on base to flood, causing hazardous driving conditions.

RAIN, from A-1

Larson said he reported the spill to the state and notified Mokapu Elementary School, here.

“This is the first time we’ve had a spill in this area,” he said.

Larson called this year's rain an extreme weather event, noting that the high rain saturation levels were most likely the cause of the spill.

“This year, we had 12 inches of rain in February and 17 inches in March,” he said. “Last year, over the same period, we had 10 inches. That is nearly three time the amount of water.”